IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended) An animal litter comprising:

non-swelling particles; and

bentonite particles a swelling agent coated on said non-swelling particles.

- 2. (original) An animal litter according to Claim 1 wherein said non-swelling particles are clay particles.
- 3. (currently amended) An animal litter according to Claim $\underline{2}$ 4 wherein said clay particles comprise agglomerated clay fines.
- 4. (original) An animal litter according to Claim 3 wherein said clay fines have a size of about 50 mesh.
 - 5. (canceled)
- 6. (currently amended) An animal litter according to Claim 1 wherein said <u>bentonite</u> particles are swelling agent is a powder.
- 7. (currently amended) An animal litter according to Claim 1 wherein said <u>bentonite</u> particles have swelling agent has a size range of about 100 mesh to about 300 mesh.
- 8. (currently amended) An animal litter according to Claim 7 wherein said <u>bentonite</u> <u>particles have swelling agent has</u> a size of about 200 mesh.
- 9. (original) An animal litter according to Claim 1 wherein said non-swelling particles have a size range of about -10 to about +50 mesh.
- 10. (currently amended) An animal litter according to Claim 1 wherein said <u>bentonite</u> particles are swelling agent is about 20% to about 40% by weight <u>of said animal litter</u>.
- 11. (currently amended) An animal litter according to Claim 10 wherein said bentonite particles are swelling agent is about 25% to about 35% by weight of said animal litter.
- 12. (currently amended) An animal litter according to Claim 11 wherein said bentonite particles are swelling agent is about 28% by weight of said animal litter.

13. (original) An absorbent material comprising:

clay particles in the range of -10 to +50 mesh; and

a coating for said particles, said coating comprising a bentonite powder.

- 14. (original) An absorbent material according to Claim 13 wherein said particles are agglomerated from clay fines of about -50 mesh in size.
- 15. (currently amended) An absorbent material according to Claim 13 wherein said powder coating comprises powder particles of about 200 mesh in size.
- 16. (currently amended) An absorbent material according to Claim 13 wherein said powder coating comprises powder particles in an amount of about 20% to about 40% by weight of said absorbent material.
 - 17. (currently amended) A clumping animal litter comprising:

clay particles in the range of -10 to +50 mesh, said particles being agglomerated from clay fines of about -50 mesh in size; and

a coating for said particles, said coating comprising bentonite.

- 18. (original) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 17 wherein said coating comprises a bentonite powder.
- 19. (original) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 17 wherein said coating comprises a bentonite powder and guar gum powder blend.
- 20. (original) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 17 wherein said coating comprises an odor control agent.
- 21. (original) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 17 wherein said coating comprises an anti-microbial agent.
- 22. (currently amended) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 18 47 wherein said coating comprises bentonite particles with a size of about 200 mesh.
- 23. (original) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 17 wherein said clay particles comprise Calcium-Montmorillonite fines.

- 24. (original) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 17 wherein said clay particles have a moisture content from about 20% to about 40% before being coated.
- 25. (original) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 17 wherein said clay particles have a moisture content from about 28% to about 34% before being coated.
- 26. (original) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 17 wherein said litter has a moisture content from about 5% to about 15%.
- 27. (original) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 26 wherein said litter has a moisture content of about 8%.
- 28. (original) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 17 wherein said coating is from about 20% to about 40% by weight of said litter.
- 29. (original) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 28 wherein said coating is from about 25% to about 35% by weight of said litter.
- 30. (original) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 29 wherein said coating is about 30% by weight of said litter.
- 31. (original) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 17 wherein the clay fines are agglomerated in a pin mixer.
- 32. (currently amended) A method for manufacturing a clumping animal litter comprising:

agglomerating clay fines into particles; and

coating the particles with a bentonite powder.

- 33. (original) A method according to Claim 32 wherein agglomerating clay fines comprises agglomerating clay fines using a pin mixer.
- 34. (original) A method according to Claim 32 wherein agglomerating clay fines comprises agglomerating a blend of clay fines and bentonite fines using a pin mixer.
- 35. (original) A method according to Claim 32 wherein agglomerating clay fines comprises agglomerating bentonite fines using a pin mixer.

36. (canceled)

- 37. (original) A method according to Claim 32 wherein coating the particles comprises coating the particles with a bentonite powder and guar gum powder blend.
- 38. (original) A method according to Claim 32 wherein coating the particles comprises coating the particles with a powder blended with a fragrance.
- 39. (original) A method according to Claim 32 wherein coating the particles comprises coating the particles using at least one of a fluidized bed dryer, a semi-continuous centrifugal coater, and a rotary coating and drying system.
- 40. (original) A method according to Claim 32 further comprising drying the coated particles.
- 41. (original) A method according to Claim 40 wherein drying the coated particles comprises drying the particles to a moisture content from about 5% to about 15%.
- 42. (original) A method according to Claim 32 wherein coating the particles comprises applying a powder in an amount of about 20% to about 40% by weight of a coated particle.
- 43. (original) A method according to Claim 42 wherein coating the particles comprises applying a powder in an amount of about 25% to about 35% by weight of a coated particle.
- 44. (original) A method according to Claim 43 wherein coating the particles comprises applying a powder in an amount of about 28% by weight of a coated particle.
 - 45. (original) A clumping animal litter comprising:

clay particles in the range of -10 to +50 mesh in size; and

bentonite powder of about 200 mesh, said powder applied as a coating to said particles in an amount of about 20% to about 40% by weight.

46. (original) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 45 wherein said clay particles are agglomerated from clay fines of about -50 mesh in size.

- 47. (currently amended) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 45 wherein said bentonite powder is sprayed in a low concentration solution on said clay particles placed in a fluidized bed.
- 48. (original) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 45 wherein said litter has a moisture content of about 5% to about 15%.
- 49. (original) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 48 wherein said litter has a moisture content of about 8%.
- 50. (original) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 45 wherein said clay particles are agglomerated from a blend of clay fines and bentonite fines of about -50 mesh in size.
- 51. (original) A clumping animal litter according to Claim 45 wherein said clay particles are agglomerated from bentonite fines of about -50 mesh in size.